jects and employments of that kind, they were low-ſpirited, would cry, or go to ſleep.

When, therefore, I adviſe my ſex not to read ſuch flimſy works, it is to induce them to read ſomething ſuperiour; for I coincide in opinion with a ſagacious man, who, having a daughter and niece under his care, purſued a very different plan with each.

The niece, who had conſiderable abilities, had, before ſhe was left to his guardianſhip, been indulged in deſultory reading. Her he endeavoured to lead, and did lead to hiſtory and moral eſſays; but his daughter, whom a fond, weak mother had indulged, and who conſequently was averſe to every thing like application, he allowed to read novels: and uſed to juſtify his conduct by ſaying, that if ſhe ever attained a reliſh for reading them, he ſhould have ſome foundation to work upon; and that erroneous opinions were better than none at all.

In fact the female mind has been ſo totally neglected, that knowledge was only to be acquired from this muddy ſource, till from reading novels ſome women of ſuperiour talents learned to deſpiſe them.

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The beſt method, I believe, that can be adopted to correct a fondneſs for novels is to ridicule them: not indiſcriminately, for then it would have little effect; but, if a judicious perſon, with ſome turn for humour, would read ſeveral to a young girl, and point out both by tones, and apt compariſons with pathetic incidents and heroic characters in hiſtory, how fooliſhly and ridiculouſly they caricatured human nature, juſt opinions might be ſubſtituted inſtead of romantic ſentiments.

In one reſpect, however, the majority of both ſexes reſemble, and equally ſhew a want of taſte and modeſty. Ignorant women, forced to be chaſte to preſerve their reputation, allow their imagination to revel in the unnatural and meretricious ſcenes ſketched by the novel writers of the day, ſlighting as inſipid the ſober dignity and matronly graces of hiſtory *, whilſt men carry the ſame vitiated taſte into life, and fly for amuſement to the wanton, from the unſophiſticated charms

* I am not now alluding to that ſuperiority of mind which leads to the creation of ideal beauty, when life, ſurveyed with a penetrating eye, appears a tragi-comedy, in which little can be ſeen to ſatisfy the heart without the help of fancy.

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